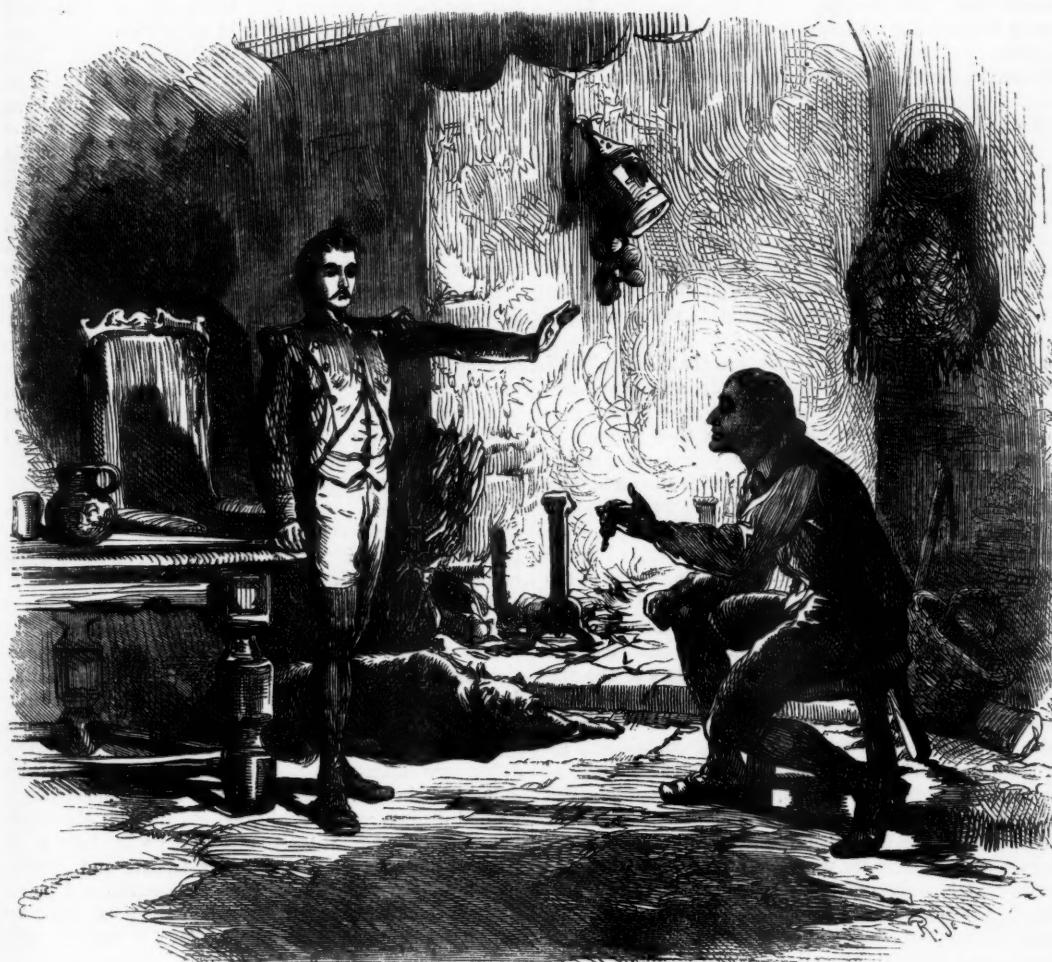


THE LEISURE HOUR.

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION.

"BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,—AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND."—*Cooper.*



ROMANE REJECTS THE PROFFERED REWARD.

THE EXILE'S TRUST:

A TALE OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

CHAPTER IX.

The Count did not appear to see the pair of gardeners, for the arbour partially hid them from his view, but walked straight into the house by the back way, the familiar footing on which he stood with the family making such a mode of entrance by no means out of rule.

"He has come back from Paris sooner than my father expected," said Lucelle, looking very much

frightened. "I wonder if he heard what you were saying, Romane."

"Not except he played the eaves-dropper, which I hope no Norman gentleman would do."

Here the young soldier was interrupted by the arrival of two village boys with a basket of roots, flowers of the forest, rare and sweet, which they had sought on sunny banks and in sheltered hollows, and dug up for Lucelle's garden.

Meantime the Count had stepped into the great kitchen, and found Jules, in his old peasant clothes, engaged in the unaristocratic employment of splitting

up a log of wood for the fire. A school-boy caught in the act of playing truant could not have looked more abashed than the owner of the château did, such *sway* had his intended and noble son-in-law acquired over his simple mind. Henne took care to let him see that he was disagreeably surprised, but his words were courteous as usual. He had got his business regarding the legacy settled more easily than one could have imagined, and, of course, his first visit was paid to his dear friend Dubois; "but," the Count added in a lower tone, "I have something of importance to tell you—let us go to the billiard-room."

He led the way, and Jules followed, looking more like the caught school-boy than ever, for the gravity of Renne's face almost terrified him; but the Count knew how to improve the impression of the moment. He shut the door of the billiard-room with great caution, and then, confronting Jules, said, in his most solemn manner, "My excellent friend, have you gone out of your judgment?"

"Not as far as I know," stammered Jules.

"I think you must, my friend, when you permit a soldier to make love to your daughter."

"To my daughter?" and Jules rushed to the door.

"Stop, stop, my friend, we must have no scenes here; you are not fully acquainted with the customs of good society," said his wily manager. "Tell me, how did the young man whom I saw with Lucelle in the garden get into your house?"

"Ah! yes; I should have told you that before;" and Jules, having now time to think coolly, at once related the circumstances which brought the young soldier into his family, winding up with his belief that Romane le Norman was an honest, trustworthy young man, whom no father might be afraid to leave with his child, and his humble opinion that the Count must have made a mistake in the matter of the love-making.

"I made no mistake at all, my dear Dubois; I never do such a thing," said Renne. "The soldier was at the tricks of his class. I knew Lucelle is a good girl, and above suspicion, or I should not have thought of making her my countess; but are you aware of the risk you run in admitting one of those men—soldiers of the Republic, as they call themselves—into the bosom of your family—men given up to the new opinions of liberty and license, without law, without religion, without regard for the authority of parents and the honour of families? As to the honesty and trustworthiness, I can understand how all that is put on. He saved your daughter's life, no doubt being a good swordsman—how I regret the opportunity was not mine!—but then the thanks and blessings of a father's heart were sufficient reward for him; you had no occasion to invite him home."

"It was a cold night, and he was a stranger in the forest," said poor Jules.

"Cold nights are nothing to soldiers, and they are strangers nowhere. You should not have endangered your daughter's honour, or, at least, her peace of mind. Perhaps the villain has poisoned that already; he appeared to be proposing an elopement as I stood behind the hedge. It was Providence directed me to come through the orchard, you see; but stay, my good Jules," and the Count caught the arm of his listener as the latter made another rush to the door. "This business must be managed prudently. Your hand is in the lion's mouth, I may say; it is unwise to provoke one of those fellows, especially for you and me, who belong to the old legitimist party," said the former *employé* of Marat; "but take an early opportunity to let him know that

your daughter is promised, contracted you might say, to a distinguished nobleman; and just hint that you have noticed his attentions to the girl, and consider his presence in your house no longer advisable. You could appeal to his honour—you know these fellows pretend to have such a thing—to relieve a father's anxiety, and spare the peace of an innocent heart; but, Jules, remember it will never do to mention me in the affair—there is nothing sets on those young fire-eaters like the notion of a jealous rival, and I would not for the world have my noble name, the best and oldest in the forest country, mixed up with that of a Republican soldier."

Leon de St. Renne had it all his own way at this time with Jules Dubois, from whom all his endeavours with prison walls and threats of the guillotine had once failed to wring the sale of the Devigne lands. Jules promised to do as he was told; and, after a little more frightening and schooling, the Count took his leave, saying, as he went down stairs, loud enough for most of the household to hear, "Then, my dear Dubois, you will buy those carriage horses for me at the next fair of Alençon."

Never was a man more perplexed how to begin the task set before him than Renne's intended *beau-père*, as the French call father-in-law. With all the Count's assertions, he could not believe in the villainy of Romane le Norman, and the debt of gratitude he owed him for saving his daughter's life balanced every consideration of prudence or precaution. Those considerations, however, pressed heavily on Jules' mind. No father could have greater confidence in the good sense and good inclinations of his child; but Lucelle had shown some unwillingness to marry the Count and his fifty years. The soldier was brave, young, and handsome, the very thing to catch a young girl's heart; he had seen the world in its most stirring scenes, and was clever enough to charm everybody with his adventures, and why might he not also charm a serious, sensible girl like Lucelle?

The young man must be got rid of; but how was it to be done. Jules thought over that question all the rest of the day; and, when the evening came, his practical and peasant mind could hit upon but one expedient. Lucelle had, in the preceding winter, knitted, as a birthday present for her father, a long purse of crimson silk, seamed with silver thread, and finished with gay tassels. Jules was extremely proud of that specimen of his daughter's industrial abilities and regard for himself; he had made a grand exhibition of it to all the neighbours, and a special display to Count de St. Renne. By the last light of the day Jules counted over and carefully placed in the two divisions of that purse a hundred livres, out of the hoard from which the poor lost Sieur had been supplied with money for his fatal voyage; and, putting it thus filled in his coat pocket, he waited till the family were retiring for the night, and then whispered to the young soldier, "Stay with me a little, and let us have a talk at the fireside by ourselves."

Romane assented; and, when all the rest were gone, Jules heaped new wood on the hearth, gave three distinct "Hems," and said, "You have done me a great service, Monsieur le Norman."

"No service at all; it was the rarest piece of good fortune I ever met with, or ever will meet," said Romane.

"Ah! but it was a great service, and I want to reward you;" and Jules' hand went into his pocket.

"Do you?" said the young soldier, and his handsome face lighted up with the boundless hope of youth; "then, Monsieur Dubois, grant me the wish of my heart

—permission to love your matchless daughter, and win a position that may be worthy of her to share."

"No, young man," said Jules, drawing himself up with all the pride of his new-found greatness; "my only child, the heiress of the lands and château of Devigne, must not think of marrying a mere soldier. Of course it is impossible that she could think of the like, being already contracted in a manner to the noble Count de St. Renne; but I do want to reward the great service. I know you are not rich, and I hope this will be of use to you. Lucelle knitted it for myself only last winter." And he held out the crimson purse.

A dark flush of pride and anger rose to the young soldier's brow, but he spoke calmly. "Monsieur Dubois, you owe me nothing; and if you think you do, your own sense must tell you that such things are not to be paid for with the money which hires a horse, or bribes a scrivener. I look for no reward, and I deserve none; but I love your daughter with all my heart; and, though I am now but a poor soldier, I may be a general of division yet. Joubert and Berthier were but soldiers once. At any rate I am promised a lieutenancy; and, monsieur, for the sake of your own youth and the woman you loved then—for your duty as a father, and the love you bear your child—consider, is it right or wise to marry her, so young, so beautiful, so good, to a man above your own age, known to be selfish and hard-hearted, and said to have served the worst of the Terrorists?"

"Young man," said Jules, getting angry, "have you come into an honest house to fill a girl's head with fine notions about yourself being made a general, when you may be shot in the first trench you are stationed in, and coax and wheedle her to disobey her father, and bring his grey hairs with sorrow to the grave, as your comrade Gaston Devigne did to my old friend the Sieur?"

"Say no more, Monsieur Dubois!" said Romane, rising, but he was deadly pale; "I am sorry I ever entered your house, but to-morrow I will leave it, and never see or speak to Lucelle more. Good night." And he hurried to his room.

Jules sat down by the fire; he could not have wished the case to take a more conclusive turn; but an uncomfortable feeling that he had been too harsh and hasty with the young soldier, who had done such a service to him and his, crept over him as his anger subsided. But Jules was a slow, cool-blooded man; and, saying to himself, "We shall both be in better temper in the morning, and have a friendly parting," he quietly retired to rest.

When the family met next day, there was no appearance of the soldier. Jules went to his room by way of making inquiry and showing kindness; but no soldier was there. The doors of the château were but lightly secured now that peaceable times had come again to the forest; and Jean Closnet, who had been early astir looking after young lambs, which he said were in his head all night, reported that he had seen a man, whom he believed to be Romane le Norman, walking rapidly away through the fields nearly an hour before sunrise. The soldier was gone, to the astonishment of everybody except Jules, and it was somewhat to his chagrin. The honest man felt heartily ashamed of his own conduct over night; but then it had served a prudent purpose, and would meet the Count's approbation; moreover, nobody knew it but Romane and himself, and Jules could keep his own secret. When Ninette remarked that it was strange such a brave and courteous youth should have stolen away like a fox without a word of

leave-taking, he said soldiers had always strange ways, and were not to be depended on, perhaps the young man had been too long with a sober family, and was in haste to get back to his wild comrades and doings. He said the same to all the neighbours; but everybody wondered at Romane's abrupt departure, and nobody wondered more than Lucelle, though she was the only one in St. Renne who did not express surprise. She found a bunch of wild flowers and forget-me-nots on the outside sill of her window, and that was all the farewell or sign of remembrance he had made after his vows and professions in the garden. "He could not have spoken truly, or he would not have left me in that careless manner," thought poor Lucelle. She had heard in village tale and song of the false ways and flattering tongues of young and handsome soldiers—how they could sigh and vow to every girl they met, and then march away and forget them at the sight of a new face. It was hard to think that Romane was one of those false-hearted men; yet why did he go with so little respect to her and to her family? And then the good girl feared that her own behaviour had been somewhat foolish, and that she should not have listened to Romane at all.

Lucelle had no confidante in her perplexity: more serious and thoughtful than the rest of the village girls, she had found no familiar friend among them; and, for all Ninette's wisdom and goodness, the difference of their years was too great to admit of free communion on such a subject. Few of the old, however wise or worthy, retain a recollection of their own youth vivid and real enough to make them fully sympathise with and understand the young. The practical lessons of after life have put the spring-time dreams and visions out of sight and out of mind with them, and thus it is that the rising and the passing generation rarely comprehend each other and often disagree. On any other topic Lucelle could have spoken freely to the good nurse, and would have been sure of her helpful judgment and advice; but of Romane, and her own thoughts of him, the young girl could not speak to the grey-haired woman. What would Ninette say but that she should have remembered her father's purpose to marry her to Count de St. Renne? The disposal of young people in marriage has always been more completely a matter of parental arrangement in France than in England, and the wisest and best minds are apt to be bounded by national custom. Lucelle could not think the same way, though she tried to do so, believing it was right; yet the more she thought of Romane's departure, the more it seemed clear to her that Count St. Renne had something to do with it, and the young soldier was not altogether to blame.

The Count was duly informed of all that had taken place by Jules in their next privy council in the billiard-room; and, while the frank forest man was expressing his regret for giving way to such angry words at his own fireside, he interrupted him with—"Jules, you acted like a man and a father, and I am glad that the fellow saw the necessity of quitting your house before he did any more mischief. Had he remained I should certainly have called him to account, notwithstanding the unsuitableness of reckoning with such a person, to a man of my rank; but, Jules, are you quite sure he will not come back to skulk about your house and garden, and wile away your daughter? Ah! my friend, my regard for you and yours makes me fear the very worst, and there is but one sure and certain way to foil the designing wretch: settle your estate upon Lucelle, and let us be contracted immediately."

"Settle my estate!" said Jules, for the words had startled his conscience. He had talked of the Devigne lands and château as his own, and acquiesced in the Sieur's untimely fate as the removal of the chief obstacle to Lucelle's inheriting them; but he was not prepared to over-step and ignore the right of Devigne's son, and put the property beyond his own power to restore.

"Why not?" said the Count. "Lucelle is your only and undoubted heiress; I suppose you don't mean to marry again at your age?" Renne was the elder of the two by a couple of years. "Besides, my dear Dubois, you should consider that you bought the place very cheap, and under peculiar circumstances. You tell me the old man is dead, that is well—I mean it is the will of Providence—but his son, a graceless spendthrift, I dare say, is in the army, and the soldiers are likely to have their own way under this plebeian government." Renne spoke with great contempt of the powers that would not employ him. "Who knows what claim might be set up, or what troublesome law-suits you might get into? Be advised, my friend, place both your estate and your daughter under the protection of a man of acknowledged position and influence as I am, and both shall be equally safe."

The Count's lecture went on to a considerable length, but it was all to the same purpose. Jules had no answering arguments, for he would not state the true one, having an inward certainty that it would not avail with the Count, and being also ashamed of the light in which it would show himself; but, fortunately recollecting that his presence was required in the madder-field, he staved off the subject by saying he would think of it. Count de St. Renne took care he should think of and not forget it. His visits to the château became more frequent than ever, and under their influence all the grandeur and gentility from which the family had been allowed to fall away in Romane's time were restored with double rigour. Lucelle had to wear her best clothes, and sit in the best rooms once more; the decrees were renewed against work unbefitting a lady; what was worse, the poor girl had now to keep the Count in company, and as that gentleman made immense exertions to fascinate her youthful imagination, she had no easy task. Her father's will was law, and she did her best to conform to it, from a sincere affection and a pious sense of duty; but the restraints of ladyship as Jules understood it, the prospect of marrying Renne, whom she feared more and did not dislike less than formerly, and the sad and weary thoughts of Romane le Norman, and his careless going away, began to tell upon the health and spirits of the beautiful forest girl.

Ninette was the first to perceive the change: she had learned to love Lucelle as her own daughter, and now that the Sieur was gone, and her foster-son had turned out so graceless, that love was the only tie she had to this world. Her marriage to the Count was an arrangement which Ninette dreaded to think of, and would have reasoned against with Jules; but the man had gone beyond her reasoning and influence in his new thirst for rank and grandeur. The old familiar converse and counsel between them was over; Jules was seldom present at the reading of her Huguenot Bible or her evening prayer now; he was occupied with the Count, with his market profits, or the most genteel of his neighbours, and, knowing well that the nurse would neither approve nor assist, he told her nothing of his plans. But Ninette guessed them all, particularly after observing the manner in which he took the news of the Sieur's death. Her heart and strength were gradually failing under the burden of years, and that intelligence

had been a heavy blow; she felt herself no longer fit to strive with the devices of a wicked man, and the folly of a simple one; but the faith of her youth was the help and comfort of her age. "I have placed my care concerning this family, with whom I have lived so long and hope to die, in the hand of my Lord," she said, "and doubtless He is able to keep them from falling; why should I be troubled with fears of that which may never happen?" Still, when Ninette saw the rose on Lucelle's young cheek fading day by day, in the midst of the summer, and when she noticed the girl's languid step and weary look, she was troubled with fears indeed.

One sweet summer evening Lucelle had stolen away from the Count and her father, to her own little garden; the nightingales had begun their songs in the deepest shades of the orchard; the rosy light yet lingered on sky and summit bright, but fading as the dreams of young romance, and she stood in the very spot where last she had stood with Romane le Norman. The wild flowers and forget-me-nots he had laid on her window-sill were withered long ago, but Lucelle had not forgotten; she stood there among the first of the roses, lost in pensive thought, till a kindly hand was laid on her fair drooping head, and a kindly voice said in her ear, "What is the matter, Lucelle?"

"Oh! nothing, nothing at all, Ninette," said the girl hastily, turning to the good nurse, who had followed her unperceived. "I was looking at the flowers; how well they grow here."

"The flowers grow well and look well, but you do not, Lucelle, my own child. Tell me what is the matter—what troubles you," and Ninette threw her arms round the young girl.

For a minute they were both silent, and then Lucelle said, in a whisper, "My father will have me to marry the Count, and Romane le Norman said he loved me."

There was the secret and burden of her young life told all at once, and followed by a gush of tears, as Lucelle leant her head upon that aged but gentle breast, and wept long and sore.

"Alas! my child," said Ninette, "youth has its trials as well as age, for the one has loves and the other has losses."

That was spoken out of the memory of her own girlish days, far off and faintly recollected as they were; but the prudent and pious woman had better comfort and better counsel to give. First, she brought to bear upon Lucelle the arguments always employed by the old generation against the rising one, and always to some extent true—that children were bound to obey their parents; that her father knew what was for her good better than she did herself; that wise girls never minded what young men said, for vows and professions were easily made, and as easily forgotten. But the girl's tears went to Ninette's heart, and she said at last, "Stay, Lucelle; do you forget that there is a Providence that rules over all things, and whose designs we know not? This marriage which you dread so much may never take place: your father may change his mind; time may bring him cause to do so, and, as you are very young, I will try to persuade him to wait for another year. By that time it may be that nothing in all the world would please my girl so well as the prospect of being a countess."

"I am sure it never will please me," said poor Lucelle, wiping her eyes. "You have often said that grand titles and châteaux did not make people happier or better."

"I say so still," said Ninette. "The most coveted of worldly things are but poor foundations to build on, for they leave us or we leave them. There is but one sure ground for our hopes, one good that is worth our

seeking, and that is the grace and love of our Father in heaven. Trust in him, Lucelle, and follow his commandments in the love of his Son, and he will make the crooked way straight, and the rough place smooth before you."

Her unshaken trust in the Disposer of all events not only gave strength and courage to Ninette's own mind, but enabled her in some degree to impart them to the minds of others. Lucelle went to sleep that night less troubled in spirit than she had felt for many a day, but the good nurse also saw the duty that lay before herself. She waited quietly till the Count was gone, till the rest of the family had retired, and Jules sat in the porch taking a last smoke of his pipe in the warm summer night.

"Is it you, Ninette?" he said, somewhat surprised, as she glided in and took a seat close by him, in the friendly fashion of their by-gone and better days.

"Yes, Jules; I could not go to sleep this night without speaking to you in private; you won't take it amiss from me; I have been long with you, and did my best for your service when things were not so prosperous as they are now. That was only my duty; but, Jules, I am an old woman, and must soon go the way of all flesh; I have laid my younger brother, the last of all my kindred, in the churchyard yonder; I have heard of my noble master perishing in the stormy sea, and the boy I nursed has forgotten my grey hairs, as he forgot his father's. Jules, I have nobody in this world but yourself and Lucelle, and you won't take it amiss if I speak to you on her account," said Ninette, in her gentle, serious way.

"Certainly not; why should I take anything amiss from you, Ninette? You never said or did wrong to mortal; you are the best friend I have in the world, and always were. But what about Lucelle?" said Jules, eagerly.

"She is troubled, Jules—troubled and vexed more than a young heart should be. We that are accustomed to the burdens and experiences of life should remember that the young sapling is more easily bowed and injured than the tough old tree. You wish to marry her to the Count de St. Renne; there I think you are wrong: but we will not speak of that, since you have set your mind upon it; our Lord direct you to what is right: but the girl dislikes the man, and dreads the marriage, and, were it a seven times better one, she is too young to take such a bond upon her and enter into the cares and duties of the world. Wait for one year, Jules; give her time to know her own mind, or get reconciled to the match you have chosen for her."

"Stop, Ninette," cried Jules; "it is all very well to talk about waiting a year; but the Count won't wait, I can tell you; he insists on having the business done without delay."

"If he knew the Devigne land and château were not yours to leave Lucelle, he would not be in such haste, Jules."

"And why are they not mine? and why should I not leave them to my daughter if she marry according to my wish, Ninette? The Sieur is gone, and I have the deed of purchase regularly signed and sealed."

"But the Sieur's son is living, Jules."

"May be he is, which one can't be very sure of, when a soldier is in question, just now; but what of that? Should I let the property go to a graceless prodigal who turned against the good old cause and broke his father's heart? I know the Sieur would never allow such a thing if he could hear of it; and what would it be but defrauding my own daughter, whom I am bound to

provide for and set forward in the world as far as I can? Ah, Ninette, if you would talk to the girl and make her understand what I am doing for her. It is all on her account that I have worked and saved, thinking to have a dowry laid by for her when the Sieur came back; and now, when there is no chance of that, I am doing my best with what fortune leaves in my way to make her a great lady, may be to be ashamed of me and my peasant doings hereafter; but I don't care if it happens so, for never father loved a daughter better than I love my Lucelle."

"Ay, Jules, and the poverty of human love might be learned from your manner of showing it, for in your zeal to make her a great lady you are blighting her youth and breaking her heart. Listen to me: the girl is not what she used to be, she goes about sad and silent, she grows thin and pale, and there are times when her look reminds me of her mother's when she first fell sick."

Ninette made that remark in all sincerity and almost by accident, but no argument within the range of her wisdom or her piety could have told on Jules with such irresistible power.

The wife of his youth, so early taken from him, had never lost her place in his memory or his dreams till Lucelle grew up to fill it: he loved the girl for her mother's sake and for her own; his pride, his hope, his heart was set upon her, and for her alone he was ready to break the sacred covenant between him and his exiled friend, and keep the estate which of right belonged to Devigne's son. But a terrible fear had arisen like a threat of judgment. What if the flower of his life should fade and die as her mother had done? what if her dread of the Count were really telling on his daughter's health? Ninette was a keen observer and she never magnified matters.

That terror overcame all the pleas he had got up for himself to meet the Count's wishes, his fear of the young soldier which he was ashamed to mention on account of their last interview, and his haste to see Lucelle a countess. He dropped his pipe, picked it up in fragments from the stones, and said, as calmly as he could, "Perhaps you are right; we had better wait for another year. In fact, you may say to Lucelle that I have made up my mind to do so."

"It is a wise resolution, and one which you will never repent," said Ninette; and she added mentally, "Our Lord be praised and grant that some way of escape may be found for the child and for you before the year is passed."

DINNER AT "THE MITRE."

I RAN up to Oxford with my father last June, to vote in the competition for the Professorship of Poetry; an amicable contest, not like that famous Jowett day, on which I last visited the dear and grand old city. To tell the truth, I cared little about the question on which I was to vote, though I voted for (as I thought) the best man, who lost it. No! it was enough for me that here was a chance of visiting the old place for a day or two, post-free. So I responded with joy to my father's genial invitation, and left behind me the cares, little and large, of my parish for three days. Paddington station: my father there all right, sitting on a bench reading; a glance at the book-stall; a penn'orth of Christian Bitters; the tickets; happily no luggage; off! Delightful to draw our slow length away from the busy platform, from under the vast span of the glass roof; delightful to perceive the gradually quickening pace, the gradually

changing scene; houses, houses for a long space; then brighter gardened abodes; then the wide flat hay meadows. Through other stations; a glimpse of Windsor Castle in the distance; a route unvaried enough to make a clump of buildings, with a lock and white broken water an excitement; then sameness again. So I dip into my "religious newspaper," musing a little how astonished at its style would have been St. Paul, or St. John the Divine, who, in all his discourses (after he had once learnt what was the spirit of Christianity), always struck the key-note of love, accompanying even his thunder with that still small voice. And I consider the thing, and whether it is well to carry on Christ's warfare with weapons from the Devil's armoury. No doubt the fiery darts *do* sting; but still, even if it be *tempting*, can it be *right* to pick them up and hurl them back? And an old melody keeps haunting my mind with sweet music of reply:

"The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, *patient, in meekness* instructing those that oppose themselves."

Meanwhile, I look out, and find food for the eye. A small stream twists its ribbon backwards and forwards about the long straight wand of the railway; sometimes lost in the meadows, but anon reappearing, diving under the line with sudden bend, and curving off upon the other side. Now it widens, and seems to rest a bit; and I eagerly look for the still pure lilies that, however, do not yet sleep on the water. But we fly on, now Reading and now Didcot are passed, and the interest waxes warm; I slide up to my window (which I have been careful to secure on the right side), and look out for the favourite bits, and for the familiar landmarks, which, as butterflies and floating carvings announced his new land to Columbus, tell me that old Oxford is nigh. Newnham: I must not lose that angle of the Isis, where it broadens in silver sleep, and the little cottage at which we used to moor peeps out under the bank of wood which slopes upward from it. Ay, there is the spot at which my brother was bathing, and (a "hencoop," *i.e.* boat-load of ladies, appearing in sight) afforded us all deep and refined delight, by bolting with inconsiderate haste behind that tree, and into a bed of nettles. But we pass by with a roar, and now are in the region of many old walks: there rushes Sandford Lasher; there stands the Island; now Iffley, the square, massive Norman tower among the trees; and I lean out to catch the sweet and dear vision of the emerging Oxford Towers. And soon I am rewarded: there stands grey, tall Magdalen; soon Merton; St. Mary's spire; hosts of minor turrets and towers; the fat ugly Radcliffe. Under the span of the light bridge across the reservoirs, into the station with slackening easy glide. How natural to see the undergrads with the college ribbons about the straw hats; the omnibuses streaked with names of colleges and halls; pretty St. Thomas's Church, robbed, alas! of its scarf of ivy—a vestment permitted by all parties in the Church—and with no bright flag to-day above the clear grey. The eye seems everywhere met by an old friend in the scenery, though of course the *dramatis personae* are grievously altered. Yes, truly, 'tis delightful indeed to come back to Oxford, if, while resident there, you have never undergone that misery of vain waiting for the testamur; nor have spent the latter days of your sojourn there in dodging duns, as the former period in contracting debts which for many years afterwards should entangle your movements; nor, in fine, have contrived to be shorn of purity, and peace, and self-respect, and quiet of conscience, during the short three or four years of residence within the venerable walls.

So my father and I greatly rejoiced to see the well-remembered points, and continued this enjoyment as we rattled along in the Mitre omnibus by Worcester College, along the Corn, past Carfax, down to Christ Church, then along the noble High Street, to the specially Oxford Hotel. There are new, huge, and handsome hotels built or building in the old city, and in their large rooms and splendid fittings they might seem quite to eclipse the somewhat insignificant building presided over by the genius of Venables, and marked by the golden mitre. But give me that House connected in so many memories with visits, rare and precious visits, to Oxford, and still to recall each last and previous stay there at each visit yet, I hope, to come. The small coffee-room, the dark staircase, the long misleading landings (it might have been here that the lady, having procured a fiery blister for her husband's sudden spasms at midnight, tore into the room, pulled down the clothes, clapped it on, and fled, terrified by the wild roar which ensued, leaving it clinging to the chest of the wrong man), all these old-world quaintnesses seem to me to smack of the flavour of the place. Or, to shelve the question at once, should any want to argue, there is the whole weight of associations—my own, and those of many another imperceptibly also influencing me—to make me faithful for ever to the Oxford Hotel, the old "Mitre."

Two rooms were soon obtained and dinner ordered, and so we set off for a stroll down the High, as of old. A few new buildings, generally, I am glad to find, built in harmony now with the character of the city. St. Mary's ugly, but associative, porch restored; roses and lilies planted about the church; lower railings round it. A sale going on at Richard's, advertised at least. Wyatt's and Thomas's shops to be examined: in one, the engraving of Millais' "Ophelia"—lovely, though less lovely far than the picture; confectioners' and grocers' shops with notices of ices, and with many bundles of straws in the window, which might, to the uninitiated, suggest bonnet-making as a staple employment at Oxford; but to me, who know, speaking eloquently of sherry cobbler. Odd that you don't get this in other places than at Oxford: two slices of lemon, powdered white sugar, lots of ice, fill up with sherry: just try this through a straw (uninhabited by an earwig) some hot day. But I glance at St. Mary's clock; the twenty minutes which we were to allow for dinner preparation have passed by, and we wend our way back again to the hospitable coffee-room. There we dine, and dine very cosily; and while dining I muse musings which, methought at the time, would find themselves set to paper in some leisure hour.

For we were anything but the only occupants, or the only diners, in that coffee-room. Any evening, in term time, that you go to the Mitre, you will be enabled to watch many fine specimens of the genus Undergraduate strolling in by twos and threes to dinner, or, later, to broiled bones and champagne. I am very fond of the genus Undergraduate; indeed, my heart goes out to a young man, at that time when, as one writes, "his eyes are bright with health and happiness; his voice is loud and cheerful, from the fulness of the many hopes that are within his heart; the winningness of health shines upon his smooth, unwrinkled features; the father looks upon him with a well-pleased pride; and his mother, more happily still, with a well-pleased love." There is, I say, a fascination to me in watching these fair, bright works of God, ripe and ruddy, unworn and unwrinkled, unbent by care and sorrow, so capable of pleasure, so unretentive of pain; brave, and glad, and generous, and happy; no depressing past behind, and so sunny and

glorious a future before them; fearing not, foreboding not, save with a tender shade of poetry and sentiment, which but enhances the warm glow; so different from what they will be ten, twenty years after, howbeit not really conscious of how this is their golden time. I prefer the silver time into which life pales down; I would not resume that inexperienced gladness; yet I like to watch the strong, fine young fellows, with never a wrinkle on the brow, and not many in the heart; with no streak yet in the hair, nor shade about the smile. Then, for one thing, I have not had health and strength myself—have ever been rather a creaking wheel; nor does this sadden me, nor would I exchange: there are advantages, tender fatterly compensations, which I would not give up for that which has lovingly been denied. Still, you know, you love and admire something beautiful and enjoyable in another the more if you have it not yourself; and I suppose this is one reason that makes me love to see the broad backs, the indicated muscles, the powerful arm hanging over the chair at rest; mightn't it, I muse, smite a Cambridge ball for five, or carry forward, through the rushing Thames, the dark-blue flag to victory! They saunter in, embodiments of sleeping strength (you see, I don't think these are the reading men generally, not but that men *may* row or cricket, and read as well); they talk and laugh, utterly unconscious of my meditations concerning them. "*In the days of thy youth*"—(the text of a sermon that I have just been writing recurs, like a besetting refrain, to my mind)—"*in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them; while the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars be not darkened.*" So my heart goes out to them, but they know nothing of this. So richly endowed by their Father with the portion of goods that falleth to them—health, vigour, high spirits, strength, life, love; the tree all in blossom, and no real deadly frosts or tempests yet. Ah! will it be "when he had spent all" with them after a few years?—will the silver light of blossom, fleeting, leave fruit, or but forlorn branches behind? "*In the days of thy youth*"—there is something coming before this, and to which the New Testament has added yet another clause—which to make them regard it would seem almost a light thing to lay down one's graver, less bright and joyous life. Who, but the rememberer of his Creator, his Redeemer, and his Sanctifier; using, but not abusing, the choice gifts within and without; who but one thus heavenly wise—

"Through all life

That blessing may prolong?
Who, through the world's sad day of strife,
Still chant his *morning song*?"

Well I have wandered far from father, Mitre, dinner. There were three young fellows sitting at the next table to ours. I don't like dogs much at any time, and I hate them at meals; yet I confess that I did give the bone of my lamb cutlet to a white, ugly, thin, large-headed, but sociably disposed beast that strayed to us from that table; I fancy for this reason—that I find one so soon loses the old young feeling, and sympathy with the interests of a former state of life, and it seemed a sort of outlet for the kindly emotions which worked in my heart towards the young fellows to show some geniality to their dog. Too trifling a matter for pen and ink perhaps; but such feathers are probably of more importance than one is apt to think, in indicating the direction of the wind. I stole a glance now and then at the trio nearest us; truly they had a distinct and clear perception of what is good. All the delicacies of the

season, "as the saying is," in the way of eating, it seemed to me; and pop, pop, of the elegant, silver-hooded, slim French bottles. Two dining at another table seemed not to be doing badly, I fancied, and another was taking some slighter refreshment. And so, half whimsically, half seriously, I branched off into another line of thought. How about the parents at home? I dare say in these cases my solicitude may have been superfluous; there may have been plenty of money for parents and sons too. Whether or no, there are instances more than enough of the hard case which arose before my mind. You see (I whisper it to you in confidence), these young fellows had no business at the Mitre at all; indeed they might have been proctorized, rusticated, I suppose, for their presence there: a capital dinner was already provided for them in their college halls; it was therefore not absolutely *necessary* that they should seek one here. So I could not help picturing the homes where, commonly enough, there was not a little pinching to send Tom or Reginald to Oxford; little treats and luxuries cut off, the father giving up small matters that he missed, though doing so without grudging; ay, sometimes the widow living straitly, and having done so since that sad day when the rectory was left, in order that the bright rosy boy might have the same advantages that his father had before him. And then the shock of finding that the boy leaves Oxford six or seven hundred pounds in debt! that, while his father was denying himself his couple of glasses of wine after dinner, the son was popping champagne corks at the Mitre or the Star; while the poor mother was walking in the heat rather than take a fly to the station, the rosy boy was flourishing after the hounds, or merrily driving tandem day after day. Thoughtlessness, no doubt, and not, at least at first, utter heartlessness; still, of a verity,

"Evil is wrought by want of thought
As well as want of heart."

And so, you see, I got thinking somewhat sadly of my brave young fellows, not therefore loving them the less. There was a dimple on the soft downy face of the one nearest to me. My mind instinctively wandered home to a one-year-old, with the merriest of brown eyes, and much such a dimple. Will Master Cyril, I meditatively asked, will he treat his poor old father and mother thus? What! shall I be sitting up late into the small hours, night after night, and hearing the morning "chavish" of the birds; writing magazine articles, what not; passing the book-shops manfully, and without a pang; giving up the little sea-side trip of former years; and will that young fellow, for whose welfare it is a pleasure to do all this, will he, I say, be drinking the beaded sparkling draught, and eating the earliest lamb, with the youngest peas, and the newest potatoes, with the other light-hearted boys in this very room, and as it might be at that very table, and we all unconscious and innocent? Ah, well, it's no joke! that blank feeling when asked, at the end of the first year, perhaps, for an extra hundred pounds, that *must* be raised somehow. They wouldn't do it—do you think they would?—if they thought about it; if they thought how the anxious, loving heart sickened; how the pride, the glow, the pleasure, the interest attached to their being at college goes, at least in great measure, thenceforth; and it is with a sad heart, and not as before, a heart taking pleasure in the sacrifice, that yet other little or great matters are given up, and further pinching invented to meet the call. I do think young men are often very hard upon the elder. How the fond parents petted them in the cradle! how much they made of the little

ways and little words as these came! and how they have stood by the cradle and the little cot with a last invocation of blessing before they turned into bed, tired with working for these same little ones! Then how sad they were when they went to school, and how their great hungering love impelled to little endearments (not wisely, perhaps) on the occasion of their visits, repelled, may be, because offered before other boys. What pride in every success. How the parent lived again in the boy's amusements and proficiencies! what joy to start them at Oxford! But often the young fellow does not make allowance enough for old thoughts and old ways; and 'tis sad to think of the sharp answer that a little over-solicitude, possibly a little unreasonableness, on the part of the old bird, brings forth from the young thing that he has brooded over so tenderly, and catered for so carefully; and that, amid all his little fussiness (if this there be), he loves so much, and is so proud of. But they can't have patience with those that have for long years been, upon the

whole, very patient with them; they can't even make allowance for the surely venial fault of *over-anxious love*. I wish my mind were clear on this score—I who have ever received nothing but love and tenderness. But few go through life with nothing to regret in their conduct to their parents. And, after all, who can supply a father's place when he has gone? How beautiful the advice of the son of Sirach—"My son, help thy father in his age, and grieve him not as long as he liveth: and if his understanding fail, have patience with him: and despise him not when thou art in thy full strength." Truly this advice applies not for my father; but, Cyril, my boy, remember it for me, if I live to need it.

Enough of my musings in the Mitre. Why have they been penned? I hardly know; but now that they are written, who can tell? Perhaps some one or two of the fine dear fellows that I love, reading it, may think tenderly of the home ones; and God may cause a very small seed to strike root, and bring forth useful fruit.

JOHN WESLEY'S TEA-POT.



At the dispersion of a celebrated collection, about ten years ago, a silver tea-pot was sold, which was said to have belonged to the celebrated John Wesley. We have tried in vain to discover the history of this notable relic, or to trace its present owner. Till some more satisfactory proof can be offered than the auctioneer's catalogue, we must remain sceptical as to the genuineness of this tea-pot. Wesley's abhorrence of tea, from his early days, was so universally known, that no one would have presented him with such an article, nor would he have purchased it even for the use of his friends, if we may judge by the characteristic reply which he sent to the Board of Excise, when suspected of not making a proper return of his plate: "Sir,—I have two silver tea-spoons at London, and two at Bristol. This is all the plate which I have at present; and I shall not buy any more while so many round me want bread." What uses he made of his tea-spoons may be guessed from his advice to his preachers on drink and diet; but there is no evidence of their connection with

the tea-pot.* We rather suppose the tea-pot to have belonged to some zealous follower who loved Wesley but did not hate tea.

However this may be, it is a curious incident in our domestic history, that towards the middle of last century there was a general attack by various eminent persons on the use of tea, foremost of whom was John Wesley. In 1748, being then already possessed of

* The following inscription is on the reverse of the John Wesley tea-pot:—

AN ACROSTIC.

HUMBLY INSCRIBED TO THE REV. MR.
JESUAN reigns. Let saints—let men adore.
O bey, ye sinners, and proclaim his pow'r!
H o, each desponding, thirsty soul, draw near,
N or money bring, nor price, nor doubt, nor fear.

W ide as Creation—deep as Sin's recess,
E xtend the merits of redeeming grace!
S o Wesley speaks—so wond'ring angels taught—
L ove, peace, goodwill to all in Christ are brought.
E namour'd thousands hear the joyful Word,
Y ield to conviction, and confess their Lord.

unbounded influence over a vast number of persons, whom he is said to have "governed with the abilities of a Richelieu," he wrote thus:—"Twenty-nine years ago, when I had spent a few months at Oxford, having, as I apprehended, an exceeding good constitution, and being

anything but a little tea morning and night." I immediately remembered my own case, and, after weighing the matter thoroughly, easily gathered from many concurring circumstances that it was the same case with them. As example must go before precept, I



THE PARLOUR AT OLNEY: COWPER, LADY AUSTEN, AND MRS. UNWIN.

otherwise in health, I was a little surprised at some symptoms of a paralytic disorder. I could not imagine what should occasion that shaking of my hand, till I observed that it was always worst after breakfast, and that, if I intermitted drinking tea for two or three days, it did not shake at all. Upon inquiry I found tea had the same effect upon others also of my acquaintance, and therefore saw that this was one of its natural effects (as several physicians have often remarked), especially when it is largely and frequently drank, and most of all on persons of weak nerves. Upon this I lessened the quantity, drank it weaker, and added some milk and sugar. But still, for above six-and-twenty years I was more or less subject to the same disorder. July was two years, I began to observe that abundance of the people in London with whom I conversed laboured under the same and many other paralytic disorders, and that in a much higher degree, insomuch that some of their nerves were quite unstrung, their bodily strength was quite decayed, and they could not go through with their daily labour. I inquired, 'Are you not a hard drinker?' and was answered by one and another, and another, 'No, indeed, sir not I; I drink scarce

left it off myself in August 1746, and my paralytic complaints are all gone; my hand is as steady as it was at fifteen, and I save upwards of fifty pounds a year.'

The result was, that Wesley strenuously charged all his preachers and followers to abstain from so pernicious and dangerous a beverage.

The next opponent of tea whom we shall bring forward is the good and benevolent Jonas Hanway, who in 1757 thus denounces its dreadful effects. He tells the ladies how, by drinking tea, they injure their health, and, what is yet more dear, their beauty. "To what can we ascribe the numerous complaints which prevail? How many sweet creatures of your sex languish with a weak digestion, low spirits, lassitudes, melancholy, and twenty disorders, which, in spite of the faculty, have yet no names except the general one, nervous complaints? Let them change their diet, and, among other articles, leave off drinking tea; it is more than probable the greatest part of them will be restored to health. Men seem to have lost their stature and comeliness, and women their beauty. I am not young; but methinks there is not quite so much beauty in this land as there was. Your very chambermaids have lost their bloom, I

suppose by sipping tea. Even the agitations of the passions at cards are not so great enemies to female charms. What Shakespeare ascribes to the concealment of love, is in this age more frequently occasioned by the use of tea." He afterwards quotes Paulli, a medical author, to prove that tea is "desiccative," or of a drying tendency, and ought not to be used after the fortieth year.

Tea found a defender, and Hanway an opponent, in Dr. Samuel Johnson, who followed him through his observations on this modern luxury, and told him it would scarcely be candid not to make a previous declaration, that he is to expect little justice from a hardened and shameless tea-drinker, who has for twenty years diluted his meals with only the infusion of this fascinating plant; whose kettle has scarcely time to cool; who with tea amuses the evening, with tea solaces the midnight, and with tea welcomes the morning. That there is less beauty in the present race of females than in those who entered the world with us, all of us are inclined to think on whom beauty has ceased to smile; but our fathers and grandfathers made the same complaint before us; and our posterity will still find beauties irresistibly powerful. That the diseases commonly called nervous, tremors, fits, habitual depression, and all the maladies which proceed from laxity and debility, are more frequent than in any former time, is, I believe, true, however deplorable. But this new race of evils will not be expelled by the prohibition of tea. Tea is drunk in no great quantity. Three cups make the common allowance, so slightly impregnated that they might be tinged with the Athenian hemlock, and produce less effects than Hanway charges upon tea.

The history of the rise and progress of tea-drinking is truly curious. Tea was first imported from Holland by the Earls of Arlington and Ossory, in 1666; from their ladies the women of quality learned its use. Its price was then sixty shillings a pound, and continued the same to 1707.

In 1664 the East India Company purchased from the Dutch merchants two pounds and two ounces, to make a present to King Charles II. In Pepys' Diary we have this entry: "I sent for a cup of tea (a Chinese drink) of which I had never drunk before." Dryden in one of his comedies speaks of it as "a morning draught for those who had drunk too deeply over-night." It was then always sold in the liquid state. In 1700 Nahum Tate, the poet-laureate (best known now as Brady's coadjutor in the metrical version of the Psalms), wrote a poem on the virtues of tea, entitled "Panacea." If not much read, the poem was much talked about, and helped to bring the Chinese plant into more common use. About twenty years later we find frequent allusions to it in popular literature.

Among the memorabilia of the history of tea is to be reckoned that it was a tax upon tea that was the proximate cause of the separation of Great Britain and her thirteen American colonies. A British ship laden with tea reached Boston, and the colonists, rather than submit to be taxed for the benefit of the British crown, burst open the boxes and threw their contents into the sea. Hence the Boston Act, and other violent exhibitions of revenge and fury, ending in the War of Independence, the humiliation of England, and the triumphant erection of a rival empire. The writer of this article was at Canton when no British subject but those in the East India Company's service was allowed to take tea from China; but at the same place there was a noble fleet of fifteen American ships, who could load as they pleased. A strange contrast this to the present time, when a fleet of clippers have an annual race from China to England,

and a handsome prize rewards the successful speed of the first-arrived tea-ship. Since the opening of commerce with the East, and the withdrawal of the Company's monopoly, the expansion of the tea trade has been enormous, and it has been the source of vast revenue to the nation.

The name of another enemy to tea which we shall bring forward will probably surprise most of our readers. It is Duncan Forbes, of Culloden, the pious, the benevolent, the able and patriotic friend of Scotland, who made himself master of the nature and history of almost every manufacture, and corresponded largely, both with the statesmen, the philosophers, and the merchants of his day, about the means of introducing them into Scotland. He was so successful in this way, that the manufactures of Scotland are called by more than one of his correspondents "his ain bairns." He is thus addressed by the author of the "Seasons," himself a Scotchman:

"Thee, Forbes, too, whom every worth attends,
As truth sincere, as weeping friendship kind;
Thee, truly generous, and in silence great,
Thy country feels through her reviving arts,
Planned by thy wisdom, by thy soul informed;
And seldom has she known a friend like thee."^{*}

In order to encourage agriculture by promoting the use of malt, he presented to Government a long detailed scheme for preventing, or rather punishing, the use of tea. "The cause," says he, "of the mischief we complain of is evidently the excessive use of tea, which is now become so common that the meanest families, even of labouring people, particularly in burghs, make their morning's meal of it, and thereby wholly disuse the ale, which heretofore was their accustomed drink; and the same drug supplies all the labouring women with their afternoon's entertainment, to the exclusion of the two-penny." The remedy for this is to impose a prohibitory duty on tea, and a penalty on those who shall use this seducing poison, if they belong to that class of mankind in this country whose circumstances do not permit them to come at tea that pays the duty. On this proposal the "Edinburgh Review,"† remarks: "These provisions, the worthy author acknowledges, are pretty severe. But it must be recollect that he is not the only person, especially about his own time, who has been eloquent and vituperative on the subject of this famous plant. Its progress, on the contrary, has been something like the progress of Truth, suspected at first, though very palatable to those who had courage to taste it, resisted as it encroached, abused as its popularity seemed to spread, and establishing its triumph at last, in cheering the whole land, from the palace to the cottage, only by the slow and resistless efforts of time and its own virtues."

Having thus triumphed over all the enemies whose tactics we have laid before our readers, tea obtained, from the Christian poet Cowper, a picture redolent of all domestic comfort and social enjoyment:

"Now stir the fire, and close the shutters fast,
Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round,
And while the bubbling and loud hissing urn
Throws up a steamy column, and the cups,
That cheer but not inebriate, wait on each,
So let us welcome peaceful evening in."[†]

We do not envy the heart that does not turn with pleasure to the famous "Parlour at Olney," the scene of

"Fireside enjoyments, home-born happiness,
And all the comforts that the lowly roof
Of undisturbed retirement, and the hours
Of long uninterrupted evening know."

* Thomson's "Autumn," line 942.

† No. 51, February 1816.

† "The Task," Book iv.

A TRIP TO ELBA.

NEAR the pier at Leghorn we found a boatman who, from intercourse with the English ships that frequent the harbour, had learned a few words of our language. Seeing we were strangers, he addressed us in his scanty stock of that tongue, saying that he was "one great rascal," and hoped to be employed by us. We were much amused at the bad name he gave himself, supposing it to be complimentary; yet, being in want of a *valet de place*, we hoped that his service might be better than his profession, and hired him. We found him very useful in procuring a felucca to take us to Elba.

No one who has not been in Italy can imagine the exactitude and strictness of compact that is necessary in every dealing with the Italians. They will serve you to the letter, but no farther. By means of our "great rascal," we found out a felucca lying in the harbour, which was going to sail for Elba the next day. It was a small lateen-rigged coaster—so small that with anything of a cargo on board there was hardly room to move. The cabin was about eight feet square, and, being an Italian boat, of course not over clean. We agreed for a certain number of dollars to hire the cabin, and to find our own provisions. At the appointed hour the next morning we were on board, but found that, in addition to ourselves, there were eight or nine women, besides an average number of children, as cabin passengers, and that already the place smelt so strongly of smoke and garlic that there was no comfort in that quarter. Hoping to obtain peaceable possession of the deck, we consoled ourselves for the loss of the cabin. The day was intensely hot, and the reflection from the walls of the castle, under which we lay, rendered the heat still more oppressive. The sailing hour was long past, yet the captain, or padrone, as he is generally called, was very busy, taking aboard a cargo of tiles, and said he could not sail for some hours. My friends, having some further business in Leghorn, went again on shore, while to my charge was committed the care of our baggage. When my friends returned, after the lapse of four or five hours, they found me driven from the possession of the deck, and resting my half-roasted limbs in a kind of wicker basket that protruded from the stern of the boat. A detachment of fifty-two soldiers, who were going to join the garrison of Elba, had taken possession of the deck. There was no appeal, as the padrone immediately weighed anchor; and, after the manner of rabbits in a pen, we made our voyage to Elba. Though vexed at being so cheated, we were in good humour with our circumstances, and laughed heartily at our novel position.

The evening was beautiful. Long shall I remember the sunset in the blue Mediterranean, near the island of Gorgona, gilding the wild rocks with the brightest metallic hue, and casting a crimson line on the waves, that seemed by its reflection to paint the whole horizon with the deepest purple. It is worth a journey to the South to know the delights of an Italian evening. After the heat of the day the soft breeze and lightness of the atmosphere is indeed luxury. If on shore, wherever you tread you raise clouds of fire-flies, that fall like showers of golden rain around you; but in our ship-cradle the setting sun called forth crowds of a less poetic insect, which, both lesser and greater, made our basket their special rendezvous. Their presence certainly detracted from the poetry of the scene.

In the morning we descried the highlands of Elba in the distance, and, as the wind freshened, and filled our picturesque lateen-sails, we were not long in drawing near the island. However, owing to the intricate

entrance to the harbour of Porto Ferrajo, it was mid-day ere we drew alongside the quay; and, having proved to the satisfaction of the authorities that we had neither the plague nor contraband goods on board, we were permitted to make our entry into Napoleon's capital.

Porto Ferrajo is but a small and thinly-populated town, but its fortifications have a most imposing appearance from the entrance of the bay. It is built on a steep rock jutting out into the bay, and joined to the island only by a low, sandy neck of land. Every accessible point is guarded by high bastions bristling with cannon. So important a port is it, that, were the island taken, the town, it is said, could maintain itself a long time against a very superior force either by sea or land. The town consists of a large square, with several streets, rising on the slope. It is well fortified, and its gates shut regularly at nightfall. The harbour is completely land-locked, but too shallow to afford anchorage for ships of very large burthen. At the extremity of the promontory is a light-house, defended by a battery which protects the entrance to the harbour; on the other side of which, about two miles distant, is a delightfully situated villa, which was a favourite residence of Napoleon. The palace of Napoleon, now the residence of the government, is a plain-built house of white stone, on an eminence above the town. The view that it commands is superb, over the blue waters of the Mediterranean to the far coast of Italy, and onward to the mountain range of the Maritime Alps, which bounds the scene. Napoleon was not much liked by the islanders, on his first arrival, as they remembered with aversion the former visits of the French; but his manner and liberality soon gained their affection. The improvements throughout the island, in his short reign, were such as former centuries had not accomplished.

Near the town, on the western side, are large salt marshes, which have been converted into salt pans, and afford a very profitable commerce to the Elbese. From five to six hundred bags are annually made.

The iron mines of Elba have long been celebrated. Virgil speaks of Ilva, rich in metals. The ore is considered of the best quality in Europe. Iron is found in many parts of the island, but at present the mines of Rio only are worked. Of course we visited them, but had great difficulty in procuring horses. We had engaged a boatman to take us to the tunny fishery, and he had orders to call us if there were any fish in the bay; but, as they did not make their appearance, we employed the man to procure horses, which he obtained for us at a farm-house. They were sorry nags, not much bigger than Shetland ponies, curious saddles being fixed to their backs, about half as large as the poor animals themselves. We mounted, and, with a little running footman by our side, set off, looking very grotesque figures, our feet nearly touching the ground. We wore blouses of brown holland, belted round our waists, the whole set-off by umbrella-brimmed hats. The horses had been all their lives trained to carry ore from the mines, and, in so doing, to walk in a lengthened file, one before the other, so that we found it impossible to break them of the old custom. If one came up to its predecessor, the first would stop for the other to pass it; but neither whip nor rein would make them go abreast.

The road was very beautiful; at first it wound round the southern extremity of the bay, and then rose abruptly towards an old castle, called Voltarajo, situated on the spur of a mountain towards the eastward. The ruins are in a most commanding situation, and prior to the invention of artillery must have been impregnable. There the robber chieftain could from his well-stored

bold look down with defiance on the galleys or invading troops of his foes, waiting, as an eagle in his eyrie, to swoop down on his prey. The road was generally very good, but narrow, being about eight feet wide, and at times rather steep; and, as the greater part of the land is uncultivated, we were seldom environed by hedges. As we approached Rio, the face of the country became more sterile. The mountain in which the iron is found seemed as though it were covered with the scoria of a volcano, and had a very ugly appearance. At Rio we rested a short time to procure guides, and, having been well stared at by the miserable inhabitants, we proceeded towards the mines. Rio is, I think, one of the most poverty-stricken places I ever saw;* the houses are high and well built, but very dirty, and there is scarcely the vestige of a window-frame to be seen. There were no cottages to give it a village appearance, so that it looked like the fragment of some town transported to the side of a barren hill. There was a small mill near the village, worked by the water collected in a large pond on the top of the hill, at times let off in a scanty stream, which, by the height of its fall, made up for the smallness of its volume. The hill on which Rio is built is composed of a grey argillaceous schist, mixed with veins of white quartz. Near this place are found fine specimens of green serpentine, and a remarkably hard sparry marble, called by the Italians *poligivera*. It takes a very good polish, and formerly was in such repute that many of the finer parts of the buildings at Rome and Naples are composed of it. In the palace at Caserta it was much used, but at present it is little known. One of the mountains near Rio bears the name of Monte Giove, and is said to have had formerly on its summit a temple to Jupiter Ammon.

The road from Rio towards the iron mines is in very bad order, and extremely steep; so much so, that we thought it advisable to dismount and lead our animals to the bottom of the mountain, where we found the road level and much better, running by the side of a stream bordered by poplars. The ascent to the mines was by a road composed of iron ore, which was lying about in great profusion. The mountain seems literally made of metal, and scarcely a blade of grass grows on it. If properly worked it would be worth millions, and very little capital need be expended on it, as the ore is on the surface, and little or no water is in the mountain; and if there were, there is so good a fall for it, that no machinery would be requisite to draw it off. At present there are about one hundred and twenty men employed in mining, and the ore is carried to the coast on ponies, where it is conveyed by small vessels to Corsica and Italy to be melted.

The life of the Elba miner is very different from that of a labourer in the deep pits of Cornwall or Wales. Here every part is open to the air, for the whole excavation has the appearance of a vast quarry. They showed us a cavern supposed to have been worked by the Romans. It ran about a hundred feet into the mountain, and, as the ore is of an inferior quality, they have discontinued to work it.

The best iron bears the name of ferrato, and the purchaser is expected to take with it a certain number of quintals of the inferior sort. Many beautiful specimens of sulphur with the various oxides are sold by the workmen. We purchased a few for a trifle; the poor fellows seemed glad to part with them at any price. In the hill is a small spring of mineral water, containing a

large proportion of sulphate of iron. It is sometimes given medicinally. A great quantity of emery is found here, and forms an article of export. There is also a fine species of red ochre.

The ancient authors speak of gold and copper being found in the island; but, excepting a small quantity of oxide of copper, I believe at present there are no indications of either. The oxide of copper is found in the Monte Calamita, or Loadstone Mountain, near Rio. The mention of this reminds one of the story of Sinbad, whose vessel was wrecked by the iron in it being attracted from it by the powerful magnet. Monte Calamita has no such power, at least in modern days. We crossed a mountain path to Porto Longone, and soon came to a more cultivated scene, where vines and corn-fields were in great abundance, the latter divided from each other by hedges of the broad-leaved aloe, whose formidable spines make an impassable barrier to man and beast. Some were in flower, and their high spikes, loaded with florets, had a beautiful effect. The natives by stripping the leaves prepare a white thread, which is very tough and fine, and can be made into a variety of pretty and useful articles. The prickly fig was sometimes mixed in the hedge with the aloe, though its spines have a less formidable appearance.

Near Porto Longone is a deep valley, surrounded by several mountains, which has in it a very pretty hermitage, built like a small Turkish mosque. From one of the summits is obtained a magnificent view of the whole island, and the coast of Italy. It bears the name of Sassa Tedescha, or German Rock. The origin of the name lies in obscurity.

The descent to the harbour and town of Porto Longone is very pretty. Like every Italian town, it is beautiful in the distance, but dirty on the approach; a few small boats and feluccas were in the harbour, and some escutcheons of the arms of the neighbouring states on the houses, marking the residence of consular agents, gave it rather an air of importance. Our great difficulty was to find the inn, our guide having remained behind at his devotions at a shrine we had passed. In Italy the osteria seems to be often purposely out of the way, and unmarked by any "sign-post;" and if the stranger happens to find any one at home, he will probably have to light his own candle on the kitchen hearth, and trust to the temper of his host to offer him anything besides bread for his repast. At Porto Longone we were tolerably off, as the landlady was gracious, and her daughter active, and soon raised a fire on the hearth to fry us some bacon, which, added to some anchovies swimming in oil, and two sorts of wine, gave us a famous feast. We were here offered for sale some good magnets, composed of a square piece of loadstone, enclosed in a brass case, with two transverse bars of iron at the bottom. They would take up a large piece of iron, but were not as strong as we expected. The mine where the loadstone is found in some quantity is situated in a barren rock, forming the south-eastern division. The veins of the mountain frequently indicate the presence of copper, by a coating of the green oxide, but the ore has never been discovered, at least in any quantity. The natives are in the habit of exposing the loadstone to the heat of the sun's rays, as they say that it strengthens the magnetic power.

A level road in very good repair leads from Porto Longone to Porto Ferrajo, and the first part gives very fine views of the eastern coast, as it runs by the side of a deep bay, part of which forms the harbour of Porto Ferrajo. The cultivation in this part is of a more advanced kind than we had before met with;

* In the "Sunday at Home," No. 655, an account will be found of the introduction of evangelical and protestant religion, which will be the beginning of a new epoch for Rio and for Elba.

the fields were neatly divided off by hedges of evergreens, and the maize and many sorts of vegetables were in very good order. Very little trouble need be taken with the tillage on so fine a soil. Were a little more bestowed, nature would well repay it, as the abundance of the harvest proves. Large districts of fine land lie uncultivated, generally covered with a thick underwood, consisting principally of arbutus and myrtle, which is admirable to the lover of the picturesque; but the wavy corn and hanging vine convey to his mind greater ideas of richness and usefulness. At present the growth of corn is very inferior to the consumption, about two-thirds of the supply being annually imported from the Continent.

On descending a steep hill, towards Porto Ferrajo, a very extensive view of the bay and town opened on us, and, as it was evening, the deep glow of the sunshine, reflected in the tranquil waters, added greatly to the beauty of the scene. Porto Ferrajo is a very hot place; exposed as it is to the southern sun, and being built in a crescent shape, with its streets rising one over the other, to the top of the rock, its natural heat is much increased by reflection. The nights were oppressively warm: the mosquito curtains scarcely protected us from the swarms of these insects.

The bays of Porto Ferrajo and Porto Longone are famed for their tunny fishery, for which the nets were laid down whilst we were in the island. They are sometimes caught of the great size of four or five hundredweight, but generally they are much smaller. The islanders have two modes of fishing for them: one by temporary nets, the other by fixed ones. A long rope joined to the shore is laid half-way across the bay; to this is attached a strong net, well leaded at the bottom, to which are joined, on the inner side, other smaller nets at right angles with it, and these are again united by transverse nets; but care is always taken to leave a small opening from one compartment to another. The inner compartment has also a net uniting the sides at the bottom, and so forming a flow to the division which has the emphatic name of the chamber of death, from its being the place of capture. Men are placed on the side to give notice of the appearance of a shoal, and immediately on the intimation being given, the whole body of fishermen is on the alert, following them in boats, and so driving them forwards towards the long net; being stopped by which, the fish attempt to pass through the narrow entrance that leads into the compartments through which they are finally driven into the end chamber, from whence there is no escape. The bottom net is then raised, and the fish are put to death by being beaten on the head with poles. There is another fish of the same species with the tunny, that is often taken near the islands, but which, from its great strength, is not a welcome visitor in the nets—I mean the sword-fish. The body is shaped like the tunny, but it has its upper jaw lengthened out into a formidable weapon resembling a sword, which it can drive with so great a force as to pierce even the timbers of a ship. They are generally taken by the harpoon. When struck, they dart off with the rapidity of a whale, and it is sometimes several hours before the capture is complete. The flesh is harder than that of the tunny, but is very wholesome, and not disagreeable.

The triglia, or red mullet, is also caught in abundance, and, when quite fresh, is the best fish the island produces. Between Elba and the little rocky island of Gorgona is the great fishery for anchovies. This fish is about four inches long, and of the family of the herring, which it resembles in its habits. They are taken in vast

shoals in nets with small meshes, and are immediately salted and exported in great quantities.

On the south-west of the island is a small town, called St. Pietro, which is celebrated for its wine, which we determined to taste; so, ordering again our steeds, we set off with our guide in search of it. For some time we followed the high road from Porto Ferrajo to Porto Marciano, which afforded some fine points of view. Turning an angle in the mountain, we came upon the Bay of Marciana, where is the best tunny fishery in the island. At the lower end of the bay is a small hamlet, inhabited by fishermen, and an extended plain, which here runs to the southern side of the island, affords a good soil for cultivation. Here we left the main road, and, following a narrow path, made our way towards the centre of the island. The mountains soon began to assume a more precipitous appearance, and on the lower spurs afforded many good sites for vineyards, which are here cultivated in the French method, the vines being kept short instead of being festooned on the trees, as is the fashion in Italy. The French mode, though not so picturesque, is more profitable; the labour and attention required is much greater, but the wine is always improved by this culture. The soil of this plain is a loose sand, on which we found a great abundance of wild flowers, including sage and flax. In some parts the sweet-scented heliotrope is found in abundance, whose flowers impart the peculiar aroma that the honey of these islands possesses. Passing near a deep bay on the southern coast, which is here guarded by martello towers, we began an ascent of the granite chain that rises in the western portion of Elba. The road soon became nothing more than a ravine, seemingly cut by the winter floods and the torrents caused by melting snows in the spring. This led us to the celebrated vineyards of St. Pietro. They are situated on the southern slope of the mountains. The soil, though good, is not deep, and rests on the granite rock, which frequently appears through it. The vines require much care in weeding and watering. At St. Pietro, which is a small village, and clean for Italy, we had the usual difficulty in finding the osteria, and I doubt much if it were the real inn that we eventually entered; but, being invited by an old woman, we dismounted, and, following her by the side of a ruined staircase, we found ourselves in a large room—paved, of course—and hung round with pictures and legends of saints. The window commanded a view of the vineyards and the southern coast, with the rocky isles of Plasnasia and Monte Christo in the distance. The former has a little cultivation on it, and at seed time and harvest is visited by some of the Elbes. It has a good well of water in it, said to have been dug by the Romans, who used it to water the galleys. Monte Christo is a mere rock, but of a remarkable form, rising to a great height in the form of a pyramid. Our hostess soon supplied us with some of the celebrated wine, and brought us some of the common sort to contrast with it. It is a species of Frontignac, but of a more generous growth, and certainly one of the best wines I had met with in Italy.

Near St. Pietro is another village, St. Ilario, celebrated for the ancient quarries in its vicinity. From an inscription we learn that they have been much used by the Pisans, and that part of the Duomo of Florence, as well as of Pisa, was built of materials from hence. The granite is of a very fine grain. Many fragments of columns are still in existence in different stages of completion, and some vases; one, of very large dimensions, is called La Nava, from its size. There are four kinds of asbestos found here; one variety, with long white fibres, is very

beautiful, and can be woven into an incombustible cloth. This mineral was much sought in ancient times, and fetched a high price, from its being used to wrap up the dead before burning them. The cloth was prepared by mixing the fibres of the asbestos with flax, and weaving it. It was then passed through a furnace, and the flax was consumed, while the mineral cloth remained. As this use of the mineral no longer exists, it is only sought for by the curious collector.

On the summit of one of the hills near this village is an old round tower, supposed from the architecture to be of Roman origin; but, as the day was intensely hot, the earnest entreaties of the guide could not make us exchange the delightful shade of a myrtle grove, through which the road led us, for the rays of the noonday sun, although they fell on the ruins of a Roman fortress. A steep descent over a most precipitous path, covered with the débris of granite rocks, led us shortly to the main road to Marciana, and the north-eastern quarter of the island. Here we met with a complete change of scene. The labour of cultivation was everywhere going on, and the hills were richly covered with chestnuts, some of a very great size; and here and there a little brook would cross our path, tumbling in a variety of cascades over the rocks. Marciana consists of two villages about two miles distant from each other; one is situated on the steep side of the mountain, and for a place of defence, for which it was probably first built, is admirably adapted. A precipitous descent led us through groves of chestnuts, and vineyards, to the other village, which is the port, and has a small harbour, surrounded by storehouses, and other signs of an active trade. We soon found the albergo, which united in one room a café and a doctor's shop, with a goodly row of bottles of drugs and compounds in the background.

The landlord was a clever, intelligent man, who spoke the French language tolerably, and from him we obtained much information concerning the neighbourhood. A pretty brisk trade is carried on from this port with Corsica and the main land, and many feluccas were in the port, taking in and discharging their cargoes, which consisted of the produce of the island, wine, tunny, etc., which they exchanged for the manufactures of the Continent. Our host informed us that Napoleon had a great fondness for this village. He would frequently ride over from Porto Ferrajo, and remain for hours, walking on the rocks, and gazing on the shores of Corsica, which are very plainly distinguishable, and the faint line on the horizon which betokened the hills of France.

I have before mentioned the tunny fishery in the Bay of Marciana, as the best in the island. The curious torpedo, of great size, is sometimes met with, and of such power as to give a severe galvanic shock. In appearance it much resembles the common skate.

With many *addios* to our friend the landlord and his portly better half, we set off for Porto Ferrajo. The first part of the road led through vineyards, carefully trained, and giving promise of a plentiful harvest. The vines were all trained, after the French method, to stakes about three feet high. Every autumn, after the vintage, they are cut down to about nine inches from the ground, leaving two eyes of the last year's wood to become the bearers of the future crop. Great care is necessary in keeping the vineyards free from weeds, especially when the grapes are ripening, as the reflection from the ground is of great service to the fruit, which is gathered about the middle of September, and is a very festive scene, but without the drunkenness too often attendant on an English harvest home. The myrtle is here cut down as the cheapest firewood. The axe was resounding in some

of the groves of this fragrant shrub, and the odoriferous smell was delightful. Some of the arbuti and bays were of such size that they deserved the name of trees. The road in some parts was very dangerous, as it often wound round the edge of a cliff, and, being unprovided with a parapet, we looked down from our saddles on the giddy depth below, knowing that a false step of our stumbling horses would precipitate us to the bottom. We at last crossed the dangerous cliff, and, riding a sort of steeplechase through some low underwood, descended to the beach. The road presently wound up the side of a steep hill, and, being a path for torrents, was in a most deplorable condition. In many places we were obliged to lift our horses before they would proceed, and we felt it a fortunate circumstance that they were so small. On reaching the top of the hill, we found ourselves on the main road to Porto Ferrajo; where, without further adventure, we arrived before the gates were shut, lighted on the last part of our journey by myriads of fire-flies that played around us. We had now seen everything worth seeing in the island, and with feelings of regret began our preparations for return to the mainland.

The Elbese are a more industrious race than the continental Italians, and though, like them, they drive a hard bargain, I have found from experience that they adhere to it when once made. The women are generally tall and well made; their complexions not so clear as the Florentines. Their common dress is a plain gown of French or Italian material, and instead of a bonnet they wear a very graceful veil of white gauze or lace, according to the condition of the wearer. I should think few places, if any, of the size of Elba can compete with it in beauty, and I should say it would amply repay any one as a site for profitable speculation, as its iron mines are so rich and inexhaustible. The mountains in which they are located are absolutely composed of the ore, and as the miner has only to strike the mountain with his pick-axe and shovel, and the iron treasure comes forth, the deep shaft and powerful engine are alike unrequired. The little capital required to make a road about two miles long to the coast would soon be amply repaid: the iron being now conveyed on the backs of wretched animals to the attendant vessels.

Shortly after dawn the following morning we were on board a small felucca, proceeding with a favourable gale to Piombino, where we disembarked about mid-day, much gratified with our visit to the island of Elba.

FOXES.

BY J. K. LORD, F.Z.S.

FROM the remotest ages the fox has invariably played a most conspicuous part in fables, and at all times Reynard appears to have been considered a great adept in the art of flattery. Where can be found a better example of this oft-practised art than is to be learned in the fable of the fox and the crow? "I protest," says the crafty fox, "I never observed it before; but your feathers are of a more delicate glossiness than anything I ever saw in my life. Oh, what a fine shape and graceful turn of the body is there! What a pity so delicate a creature should be dumb!" What could any sensitive crow do under the circumstances but open her mouth to the deceiver, and so give him the advantage he sought?

When acting as one of the crafty courtiers of King Lion, we find the fox bowing low, and saying, "O father of beauty and awe," showing a second time that vanity is the most salient point for successful attack.

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"COMING EVENTS."

"All, regardless of their doom,
The little unction play;
No sense have they of ill to come." —

"The fox and the grapes" has become an everyday simile; but a sparrow, we are told, was, in this case, nearly as crafty as the fox. Hearing the disappointed animal belie himself by saying the grapes were sour, the sparrow sagely replied, "The grapes certainly do not look sour; I will taste them." Finding the fruit all that could be desired, he gave a party and invited all his friends, when thus the grapes moralised: "Admiration often works more harm to us than evil speaking."

Of all the beasts of prey, we may safely say that the fox (*vulpes vulgaris*) is the most cunning and sagacious, whether it exercises its wonderful craft in eluding its enemies or in obtaining its food. As the sun sinks behind the hills, and the lengthening shadows foretell the coming darkness, then Reynard creeps from out his lair to go in search of prey. Nothing comes amiss to this prince of poachers; rabbit warrens, poultry yards, game preserves, are alike suitable to his taste; and, when times are rather hard, and a dainty leveret, a plump pheasant, or a fat wild duck cannot be obtained, Reynard is quite contented to levy contributions upon anything that may by chance fall in his way. Foxes, so it has been said, sometimes visit the rocks at low tides and seize upon the crustaceans and molluscs; and they will readily devour small rodents, and even reptiles and insects, in cases of extreme hunger. We read wondrous accounts, in some of the older works upon natural history, of the fox employing its bushy tail as a fishing line. "Sitting on the rocks, it lets its tail drop into the sea, and so hauls out quantities of crabs." I need hardly comment upon the untruthfulness of such an absurd belief. The fox not only has a habit of carefully providing for its present necessities, but has likewise a keen eye to the future, and, having gorged as much as it reasonably can, selects a spot adapted to its purpose, and there carefully buries the unconsumed portions of the banquet.

Bell ("Brit. Quad."), writing of the fox, says, "The obliquity and quickness of the eye, the sharp shrewd-looking muzzle, and the erect ears, afford the most unequivocal indications of that mingled acuteness and fraud which have long rendered it a by-word and proverb, for it is well known that this character of its physiognomy is not falsified by the animal's real propensities and habits." It would be quite useless to accurately describe an animal so well known as our common British fox; one peculiarity is, however, worthy of remark: the pupils of the eyes are elliptical. Its voice is a sharp grating discordant yelp, not the least like that of a dog. There are stories innumerable relative to the fox's cunning.

Mr. St. John relates the following singular story of the craftiness of a fox:—"Soon after it was daylight I observed a large fox come very quietly along the edge of the plantation; he looked with great care over the turf wall into the field, and seemed to long very much to get hold of some of the hares that were feeding in it, but apparently knew that there was no chance of catching one by dint of running. After considering a short time, he examined the different gaps in the wall, fixed upon one which appeared to be most frequented, and laid himself down close to it in an attitude like that of a cat at a mouse-hole. In the meantime I watched all his plans; with great care he scraped a hollow in the ground, throwing up the sand as a kind of screen; every now and then, however, he stopped to listen, and sometimes to take a most cautious peep into the field. When he had done this, he laid himself down in a convenient posture for springing upon his prey, only occasionally reconnoitring the feeding hares. Several

hares passed very near his place of ambush, still he took no apparent notice of them. Two at length came directly towards him, and, though he did not venture to look up, I saw, by an involuntary motion of his ears, that those quick organs had already warned him of their approach. Two hares came through the gap together, and the fox, springing with the rapidity of lightning, caught one and killed her immediately."

This exactly tallies with a story recently told me by a personal friend of mine, who is an able and observant naturalist, of the proceedings of a fox which he recently watched during a moonlight night. A hare was crouched down in a furrow of a ploughed field; the fox spied her out, and creeping along the adjoining furrow, slowly and noiselessly drew nearer and nearer to the hare. Reynard only now and then ventured to peep over the ridge of the furrow, lest the hare should notice him; when sufficiently near, the poacher made a sudden rush, and seized the hare before she was at all aware of an enemy's presence.

I once, whilst fishing in a small trout river in Devonshire, observed a fox come down to the stream near to where I was standing; the animal was panting and breathing heavily, and otherwise exhibiting evidence of great distress. After lapping the water thirstily and greedily, it crept beneath the bushes and scrambled along under the bank for quite a hundred yards, or perhaps more, until it reached a stick which crossed the stream from bank to bank. The stick was so small that I never for a moment imagined an animal so large as a fox would attempt to cross the river upon it; but, to my astonishment, slowly and cautiously the frightened animal made its way along this dangerous bridge, and landed safely on the opposite side. Not a moment too soon for its own safety, for the hounds were rapidly hunting along upon its track. On they came, but failed to make out the scent farther than where the fox had left the field to go under the bank. The huntsman never imagined the fox had crossed the river, for the hounds swam over at the spot where the fox had lapped the water, but as there was no scent on the opposite bank they swam back again. After making a wide cast, the huntsman called off the hounds and went away. I did not tell him what I had seen, because I thought the poor fox fairly deserved my protection. Now it would have been far easier for the fox to have swum straight across the stream, and a greater saving of time, than taking a difficult course under the river bank and making a hazardous crossing upon a small pole. I thought at the time, and I am still of the same opinion, that its instinctive natural cunning prompted it to adopt the expedient I witnessed, as being the most likely means to throw the hounds off the scent, and so increase the chances of escape.

Many instances are recorded where foxes under the influence of extreme terror have feigned death, and, like the opossum, have suffered themselves to be dragged about, without showing any sign of life, until the danger had ceased, when they scampered away unscathed. That the prey should be more cunning than the preyed on is an essential law of nature; but of all predatory animals the fox certainly has by far the largest share of inherent craftiness.

The fox never, even when in a semi-domestic condition, manifests the obedience and gratitude that characterise the dog. I have more than once owned a tame fox, and, although I treated it with every possible kindness, and tried by every artifice to win its regard and confidence, still there was always a certain amount of timid sly suspiciousness I could never overcome.

Varieties.

PASCAL AND NEWTON.—At the Dundee meeting of the British Association, Sir David Brewster demonstrated, by external and internal evidence, that the documents recently laid before the French Academy of Sciences as original letters of Sir Isaac Newton to Pascal are forgeries. The object of this pretended correspondence was to show that Newton was anticipated by Pascal in regard to the discovery of the law of gravitation.

PROGRESS OF POPERY: THE WISH THE FATHER TO THE THOUGHT.—Protestantism is dead in England. We may save the time which controversy wastes, and, instead of going out into the battle-field, we may go into the harvest-field to reap and to bind, and to gather our sheaves into our garner.—*Archbishop Manning.*

UMBRELLA AND PARASOL HOSPITAL.—An ingenious workman near the Town Hall, Hanley, in the Potteries, has the following signboard over his shop-door: "Umbrella and Parasol Hospital. Broken ribs carefully reset or replaced by new ones, every joint strengthened and made sound, and the whole frame recovered on the most reasonable terms."

DR. LIVINGSTONE.—Though he did not directly employ himself in his expeditions of discovery in preaching the Gospel, he always regarded himself as the pioneer of Christianity and civilisation. It was not merely to add another province to our geographical knowledge, or to trace a few more lines upon the blank spaces in the map of Africa, that he bore the hardships and faced the perils of an unknown country. His great aim and object everywhere was to bring fresh light and knowledge and happiness, here and hereafter, to miserable and perishing tribes of men and women. How they could best be brought into contact with the European races, where missions could be planted and on what principles conducted, above all—because in his mind it was the first and most necessary step to all the others—how a check could be given to that accursed slave-trade, which he has described so vividly, and which seemed to him the one grand obstacle in the way of all improvement,—these were the topics which chiefly filled his mind, and which give life and animation to his pages. Fully aware as he was of the infirmities and vices of the negro, he has never for an instant acquiesced in those anthropological theories, so much in vogue with some travellers, which would condemn him to remain for ever a member of a hopelessly inferior race, whose true and natural place in the world was only to be found in a state of slavery. He held firmly and proclaimed emphatically that the African tribes are composed of men and women like ourselves, ground down by oppression, misery, and ignorance, but whom we are bound by the common debt of humanity, as well as by the higher obligations of religion, to assist in raising, purifying, Christianizing.—*The Guardian.*

COTTON-SPINNING.—The number of spindles now employed in the cotton manufacture in Great Britain exceeds 36,000,000. Their produce of yarn, when in regular work, is 64,000,000 miles in a day of ten hours, which gives enough to wind four times round the globe every minute.

THE VIRGIN'S TREE.—An incident arising out of the Egyptian Viceroy's visit to Europe is thus recorded in the papers of the day: "Ismail Pasha, according to the *Egypt*, as soon as he arrived in Paris, made a gift to the Empress of the tree and the ground surrounding it under which, as tradition says, the Virgin rested during the flight into Egypt. Every one in that country knows the Virgin's tree. His Highness had inclosed in a small coffer a portion of the earth in which it is planted, a piece of the bark, and the *hodget*, or title to the property, which were presented to her Majesty." The tree thus alluded to is of some historical interest, and will be found at Matarea, or Matarieh, a few miles to the north-east of Cairo, and with good reason regarded as the site of Heliopolis or On, where the patriarch Joseph lived. This Heliopolis was also called Ain Shems, or Fountain of the Sun, from the existence of a remarkable spring or well, which was celebrated from remote antiquity. After the decline of paganism the Christians adapted the old legends to new purposes, and hence we find quite a cluster of them clinging to Ain Shems or Matarea. The writer of the Arabic Gospel of the Infancy, more than a thousand years ago, when narrating the flight into Egypt, says: "Hence they proceedeth to the sycamore-tree, which is now called Matarea, and the Lord Jesus produced a

fountain in Matarea, wherein Lady Mary washed her garment. Now from the sweat of the Lord Jesus which he there let drop, the balsam came forth in that region." (Cowper's Translation, chap. 24.) Some of the old authors who mention the fountain and the balsam do not refer to the tree. Sir John Maundeville, about 1322, mentions the balsam or balm, and says there were seven wells which Jesus made with his feet when he went to play with the children. Thevenot relates the legend much as it appears in the learned Wansleb's curious book, "Nouvelle Relation en forme de Journal d'un Voyage fait en Egypte." Wansleb says: "There was formerly to be seen in the same garden the sycamore which, after the tradition of the Copts, was miraculously rent asunder to shelter our Lord and his holy Mother when Herod's soldiers pursued them. They tell how that, being secreted in the hollow tree, they escaped from the hands of the enemy because a spider's web was spread over the entrance, and looked very old, although made in an instant by Divine power. Therefore the soldiers could not fancy anybody was inside, and least of all those they sought for. The Franciscans of the Holy Land, who reside at Cairo, dispute with the gardeners the possession of this tree, saying that it fell of old age in 1656, and that they collected its last remains, and preserve them in their vestry, where I saw them, as a very precious relic. On the contrary, the gardeners show in this garden a stump (*souche*), which I also saw, and which they affirm is what remains of the ancient sycamore." Wansleb does not pretend to decide the dispute, which he considers a mere trifle. But it is plain enough that the old stump which he saw is no longer a trifle, but has succeeded to use the honours of the original tree. Of course we do not imagine for a moment that the old tree given to her Majesty the French Empress has really existed 1860 years, and we know that no existing tradition can be traced back above half that time, with the hitch mentioned by Wansleb; but for all that the legend is a curious one. To our minds the Christian and Mohammedan versions are of some value, but only as constituting the succession which enables us to identify the locality with a spot mentioned by writers so ancient and so sacred as Isaiah and Moses. We have the legend under a variety of forms; but the scene to which it attaches is always easily identified.

B. H. C.

IMPERIAL TRAVELLING.—The special train in which the Emperor Napoleon went with his suite from Paris to Salzburg is described as exceeding in comfort and elegance anything of the kind that has hitherto been known. The train consisted of nine carriages, communicating with each other by tastefully decorated bridges. In the middle was a handsome sitting-room, furnished with chairs, ottomans, sofas, mirrors, pictures, clocks, and chandeliers. On one side of this room was the dining-room, and on the other the Emperor's study. In the middle of the dining-room there was a table capable of being extended or contracted at pleasure, with easy chairs placed parallel to the sides of the carriage. The Emperor's study contained an elegant writing-table, a clock in the style of the renaissance, a thermometer, a barometer, and a telegraphic apparatus, by means of which telegraphic communication was established with the apartments of the various court officials travelling with his Majesty. Next to the study was the bedroom of the Emperor and Empress, with two beds placed transversely against the sides of the carriage. Two dressing-rooms were attached to the bedroom. The remaining carriages consisted of a kitchen, a wine cellar, and the apartments of the Emperor's suite. There was also a conservatory filled with the choicest flowers.—*Pall Mall Gazette.*

HOUSE TAX.—In the financial year ending the 5th of April, 1866, 608,345 houses and shops were assessed to house duty in England and Wales, being worth £20 a year or upwards. 232,344 were assessed under £30; 198,968 at £30 and under £50; 123,885 at £50 and under £100; 40,412 at £100 and under £200; 11,051 at £200 and under £500; 1,297 at £500 and under £1,000; 293 at £1,000 and under £2,000; eighty-five at £2,000 and under £5,000; three at £5,000 and under £5,050; one at £6,000, one at £6,500, one at £8,200, one at £8,350, one at £8,500, one at £9,000, and one at £20,000. One in Lancashire was assessed at £3,000 a year, one in East Sussex at £4,400, one in East Surrey at £4,550; but all the ten assessed at £5,000 or above that value were in Middlesex.